



# **ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT**

## Aspects of Economic Development

**BY**

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**ON THE OCCASION OF THE**

**OPENING OF THE FIRST MEETING**

**OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE SECOND PARLIAMENT**

**ON MONDAY, 11<sup>th</sup> JULY, 1983**

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members of the House of Assembly,

### ***Introduction***

I wish to express my sincere appreciation for the kind invitation extended to my wife to attend this function and for me to address this Honourable House on the occasion of the opening of Parliament - the first Meeting of the Fourth Session of the Second Parliament, under the 1978 Commonwealth of Dominica Constitution. My message concerns aspect of economic development which because of their basic nature are often taken for granted and sometimes disregarded, but are in essence of vital importance.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

### ***Economic Growth and Study of Society***

Economic growth depends upon technological knowledge about things and living creatures, and also upon knowledge about man and his relations with fellowmen. The former is often emphasized in this context, but the later is just as important since growth depends as much upon such matters as learning how to administer organizations, or creating institutions which favour economizing effort, as it does upon breeding new plants or learning how to build better roads and bridges. Expenditure on the study of society therefore, deserves serious consideration.

Indeed, the proximate causes of economic growth are the effort to economise, the accumulation of knowledge, and the accumulation of capital.

Knowledge grows because man is by nature curious and experimental. His curiosity causes him to enquire into things because they attract his attention, even though they may not be immediately relevant to his practical problems. And his desire to experiment is also greatly stimulated by the practical tasks in hand, and the problems they pose for solution.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

### ***The Application of New Ideas***

This suggests the application of New Ideas. There is always a gap between what is known to the expert to be the most effective way of doing things, and what is actually done by the great majority of people. It is not enough that knowledge should grow; it depends partly on the extent to which

institutions make it profitable to acquire and apply new ideas. If new knowledge is to be accepted and applied to production, it must be profitable and appropriate, as well as new.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

### ***Training Programmes a Priority***

Closely associated with development is the priority of training programmes. Economic development makes tremendous demands on educational facilities at every level. There is greater demand for primary education, more secondary schools are needed, either to supply more secondary education for its own sake, or else to provide materials for university, or for further training as secretaries, teachers, or technical assistants. A whole range of training facilities is required, for artisans, agricultural assistants, teachers, nurses, mechanics. Outside the range of these institutions there is the field of adult education, extending from literacy campaigns or agriculture extension to literacy classes. And crowning the whole system is the need for training at university level in almost every branch of knowledge.

The cost of providing all these services 'properly' is beyond the budgetary capacity of the Country. Hence choice has to be exercised. Shall there be few well trained, or a much larger number half-trained? On what priorities shall there be as between technical and secondary, adult and primary, on humanistic and technological. Much stress is currently being laid on adult and rightly so. However, a successful programme must win the enthusiasm of the participants who should not only give their time and their mind to the subjects taught, but will also infect others with their enthusiasm, and pass on their knowledge.

I think agricultural education illustrates very well several points which arise. For example, the problem of priority, the role of the practically trained, and the importance of enthusiasm. As for priority, expenditure on bringing new knowledge to peasant farmers is probably the most productive investment which can be made in Dominica with a predominantly agricultural economy; raising the productivity of the soil is the surest and quickest way now available for increasing the national income substantially. The extension officer must be carefully selected and suitably trained; his main problem is to make contact; not just social contact, which is easy enough in village communities, but that contact of mind which results in imitation. The extension officer's problem is to create an atmosphere, in which the farmers look upon agricultural officers as an essential part of the agricultural community, existing in order to make life easier for the farmer. And essential part consists in really having something to offer. If the extension officer succeeds in solving some problems which has worried the farmers - some disease for example - he will gain their confidence; whereas if nothing comes from taking his advice, the farmers will not take him seriously, with the very obvious consequences. Agricultural extension as well as programmes in other fields must therefore be seen only as part of a wider programme of improvement. In the

context of Agriculture, these include such other things as roads, agricultural credit, water supplies, efficient marketing, the development of new industries to absorb surplus labour, co-operatives and so on; and possibly some land reform measures. Economic growth always involves change on a wide front, and of no sector is this more true than it is of rural life.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

### *Industrial Aptitudes*

I shall now touch on the question of industrial aptitudes, since growth usually results in a continuous decline in the importance of agriculture. Hence other industries are continuously recruiting labour from the agricultural sector.

Economists point out that it is the universal experience that when rural labour first come into industry productivity is very low, compared with that of labour which has been working in industry for a very long time. Several reasons are put forward for this. First of all, the industrial way of life is quite different from the agricultural. In agriculture, one has the short bursts of intense activity from dawn till dusk, associated with planting or with harvesting, followed by long periods of idleness or leisurely activity in the seasons unfavourable for agriculture. This is true of Dominica. In industry, on the other hand one is expected to work at an even pace of eight hours of every day, for five or six days a week, throughout the year. In peasant agriculture again, one works as one's master, plying a craft familiar from birth, and making numerous decisions all the time. In the factory one plying a new craft, under supervision, doing exactly what one is told, and acting as merely as a cog in some very complicated mechanism. The community is also different. In the fields one works alone, or with a few chosen friends. Whereas in the factory one works with a large crowd of people whom one has no part in choosing. I suggest that it takes a long time to grow accustomed to these new ways of living, and to settle down into the kind of regularity, industrial life demands. The transition may however be easier if the philosophy of the employee already includes a great respect for discipline, for system, and for order in community relations, since this prepares them for the highly regulated life with which they will have to live in large industrial undertakings.

The differences of background may explain also why discipline tends to be strict and irksome in the early stage of industrialization. Many of the things which rural workers have a natural inclination to do, are incompatible with efficient industry, and the task of forming different natural inclinations is crude and self-defeating, because it is exercised by persons who do not understand the problems or the people with whom they are dealing; but it is inevitable that some form of strict discipline cannot be escaped entirely in early stages of industrialization.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

***Business Administration***

My message will not be complete if I did not comment on Business Administration. Economic development creates very great demands for competent administrators, whether in business or in public service. Developing countries frequently have a multitude of businessmen – small traders especially – with a well developed passion for making money by buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market. What is deficient is not the spirit of enterprise, but the experience of sound and effective administrative. The economics of large scale production makes possible a considerable increase in income, if only people can be capable of managing large undertakings efficiently, including managing large numbers of men and great quantities of physical resources. It is inn knowledge and experience of the problems of large scale administration that the deficiency is most evident.

I should like to strike a note alarm here. Development programmes inevitably involve change, and this often results in frictions, petty differences and jealousies among staff. Such a situation can be disastrous, for unfortunately it often surfaces among senior personnel. This must be monitored unceasingly and dealt with promptly and effectively should a situation arise.

The question may be asked: Is a manger a leader? Some are and some unfortunately aren't but they all should think of themselves as leading the people who work under them – but leadership and management are topics for further discussions.

A valuable training ground for business management is the co-operative movement which, when it is run on a democratic basis, gives large numbers of people an insight into business problems, and some experience of commercial management. This is probably the most valuable aspect of the co-operative movement.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

***Transformation in People's Lives***

What kind of transformation do we want to see in the lives of our people, as they adapt the physical tools of mechanized, industrialized civilization to our society? Surely, we want them and their sons and daughters to have lively, inquiring individual minds, each man a self-respecting being, using his own intelligence and energies to improve his lot. We want them to live their own individual lives as part of the process of advancement and betterment, doing their jobs well for their own sakes, and building a better life for their children to inherit. To provide a stimulus or motivation to this end should, I suggest, be a deliberate aim of every part of a well-conceived policy for

development. Indeed self-sustaining economic growth demands hard work and continuous innovation to suit local conditions and demands.

I suggest that suitable starting point for policy-makers and administrators should be: Survey things as they are, observe what needs to be done, study the means you have to do it, and then work out practical ways of going about it. The sequence is important, especially the starting point. (The Theory of Economic Growth – W. Arthur Lewis).

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members of the House of Assembly,

***Conclusion***

May the Almighty guide your discussions and bless the work of this Honourable House.